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A

SERMON

CONCERNING

DISCRETION

IN

GIVING ALMS.

PREACHED

At St *Sepulchres* Church in *London*, inſtead of the *Spittle*, upon *Wedneſday* in *Eaſter*-week, *April* vi. MDCLXXXI.

By *THO. TENISON*, D.D. Vicar of St *Martins* in the Fields, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

LONDON,

Printed by *J. Macock*, for *Francis Tyton* at the *Three-Daggers* in *Fleet-ſtreet*, over againſt St *Dunſtans* Church, MDCLXXXI.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *PATIENCE WARD*

Lord Mayor

OF THE

CITY of LONDON:

And to the

HONOURABLE

COURT of ALDERMEN.

Right Honourable,

IN obedience to Your commands, I have made this Diſcourſe Publick; and I humbly offer it to Your favourable acceptance. There is need of ſuch candour in reference to the manner of handling this Argument; it being ſo difficult.

ficult to ſpeak diſcreetly of Diſcretion, and with perfect Charity, of the laviſh Abuſers of it. But, touching the Argument it ſelf, I forbear to uſe any Apologie; it being (as I think) agreeable enough to the deſign of a Spittle-Sermon.

There is another branch of Charity which equally needeth Prudence, and is as neceſſary to be conſider'd, though, at that time and place, it was not a ſubject ſo proper for me. I mean, that Diſcreet Charity which moderates our Cenſures. It is too common a practice to leap from bare Report to uncharitable Opinion and unchriſtian Language; without ſtaying at all in the mid-way, to examine the grounds of ordinary Fame. And ſo, by publick Clamour, and by private Diſcontent, as by Winds aloft and Earthquakes beneath, the frame of Civil Polity is diſordered. And it may be taken up againſt us, as a Proverb of Reproach,

That

That England *is a Creature which, if it finds no other way of dying, will kill it ſelf with jealouſie and fretfulneſs. We make* others *our Enemies, by thinking them to be ſo, and by giving ſcandalous Characters of them, before we truly underſtand their merits. And I heartily thank God, that I have found, in Converſation, ſo much of good temper and real Piety in many Men, upon whom raſhneſs had fixed names of Infamy. God grant that we may, on all hands, avoid Extreams; and, by the voice of univerſal Charity, call back that Bleſſed Peace which hath ſeemed to be flying from us. No man can deſire this with greater degrees of affection and ſincerity, than,*

Right Honourable,

Your humble and
moſt faithful Servant,

THO. TENISON.

PSAL. cxii. part of verſe 5.

A Good man—— will guide his Affairs with Diſcretion.

PRudence (if we diſcourſe concerning it with propriety) is not ſo much a diſtinct and particular virtue, as the *common Governeſs* of all the virtues. It conſidereth the *ſcope* at which we aim; it chuſeth honeſt and uſeful *means*, and fitteth them to their end; it conducteth them, in due manner, in their operation; it adjuſteth all the circumſtances of humane life.

It is true, there may be ſomething done without it which is, in its nature, *good*: but, even then, it cannot be ſaid to be performed *well* and correctly, and with the approbation of right reaſon. For to affirm that *chance* is wiſe, is to

ſay moſt abſurdly of it, that it is not it ſelf.

The uſeful influence of *diſcretion* appeareth, plainly, in all the Affairs of a Chriſtian man. But I ſhall only give an inſtance of it in the exerciſe of Charity; whether it be when we uſe *Reproof*, or adminiſter *Alms*.

In uſing of Reproof, it is *Diſcretion* which ſheweth *what Arcana* of Vice are unfit to be expoſed; at *what ſeaſons* men in fault are in the fitteſt temper for Advice; *what* are thoſe *happy hours* in which they are ſofteſt, and moſt receptive of any virtuous impreſſion; by *what ſteps* and degrees we ought to proceed; *when* we are to favour the modeſty, or to daſh the confidence, of offenders; *how* we ought to proportion the degree of our paſſion to the quality of the offence; leſt, by equal vehemence againſt infirmity and preſumption, we hinder the ignorant from diſcerning whether the crime be venial, or unworthy of favour.

Then, *in the Adminiſtration of Alms*, we are guilty of unprofitable (not to ſay, very injurious) profuſeneſs, whenſoever *Prudence* is not the *diſpenſer* of them. Alms are call'd, in *Holy writ*, by the venerable Name of Religious *Offerings*. But, whatſoever the Altar be at which they are preſented without *Diſcretion*, they are ſo ma-

ny

ny *Sacrifices without Salt.* Wherefore, in the Text, *Charity* and *Prudence* meet together in this excellent character of a bountiful Perſon; *A good man* [*ſheweth favour, and lendeth, and*] *will guide his Affairs with Diſcretion.*

You perceive, by this Introduction, what is like to be my preſent Argument, that particular one *of Diſcretion in giving Alms*, and not that of Charity in general, in praiſe of which ſo much hath been, already, ſaid by others, and ſo very accurately; that they have, in effect, exhauſted the ſubject.

And, indeed, it appears to every judicious Chriſtian ſo excellent and ſo neceſſary a duty; that it is difficult for ſuch a one to prevent amazement when he hears it put in form of Query by the *Schools*, [a] *whether or no Charity be a virtue?* I mean this of ſuch a man as is not well acquainted with their uſual way of tying knots upon the plaineſt things to ſhew their dexterity in the ſolution.

[a] T. Aquin. Sum. 2ª 2æ q. 23. Art. 3. *utrum Charitas ſit virtus?*

Now, in purſuance of my intended ſubject, I ſhall,

In the firſt place, inquire who that *good man* is who is deſcribed in the Text, as a perſon, at the ſame time *wiſe*, and *liberal.*

Secondly, I ſhall ſhow, in general, that *bounty* ought, evermore, to be govern'd by *Diſcretion.*

Thirdly, I ſhall lay, before your conſideration, thoſe particular meaſures of Religious Prudence by which a man, truly and wiſely Charitable, does *guide his Affairs.*

Fourthly, I ſhall earneſtly move this Audience (if need there be of importunity in ſo good a cauſe and in a Chriſtian Aſſembly) both to *Charity* it ſelf, and to the *prudence* of it.

Laſtly, Under this Exhortation, I ſhall direct to ſuch *means* as are proper to be uſed towards the attainment of this great perfection of diſcreet and rational bounty.

And all this, to the intent that they whom God hath proſper'd, may be perſwaded both to *communicate*, and to do it in ſuch prudent and profitable manner; that the Providence of God may be glorify'd by mans wiſe and good management of its liberality to him; that the publick needs may be the more conveniently ſupply'd; and that men of equal diſcretion and Charity may *lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, and, at length, lay hold of eternal life.*

I am (by the order I have preſcrib'd to my ſelf) to inquire, in

The

The firſt place, Who that *good man* is, in commendation of whoſe Charity and prudence, not only the Text, but this whole Pſalm, is penn'd. And it is manifeſt by theſe following words [*he ſheweth favour and lendeth*] that by ſuch a one is meant, a man of gentle temper and generous diſpoſition; a Man neither *rigid* nor *ſelfiſh*: one to whom belong the good qualities of the Zone we live in, which is temperate and fruitful. So that this kind of *goodneſs* conſiſteth in two very valuable things, *ſweetneſs of nature, and largeneſs of heart*. And both theſe generally go together. For it is with the ſoul of man as it is with the parts of matter, which, the leſſer they are, they are always the harder, and the more inflexible.

And, Firſt, This *Good man* excelleth in ſweetneſs and goodneſs of Nature. By which I mean not that eaſineſs of temper which renders him apt to be ſeduced, but that humanity of diſpoſition which prepares him with inclination to do good. The Hebrew word which, in our Tranſlation, is rendred [*a good man*] is, in that of the *Seventy*, interpreted by χρηστὸς which ſignifies *gentle and benign*. And *Phavorinus*[b] gloſſeth this Greek word by that other of ὑφειμένος, equitable, clement, void of rigour, humane, merciful.

[b] Phav. Lex. p. 1874. χρηστὸς — ὁ ὑφειμένος. — χρηστότης — ἡ συμπαθὴς.

Secondly,

Secondly, This *Good man* excelleth in largeneſs of heart. *Vir bonus* is, here, *Vir utilis*. A Good man is a man uſeful to his Generation. In this ſence the Law is ſaid [c] to be, not only *holy* [or a Rule ſeparate from the immoral meaſures which the World lives by] and *juſt* [that is, a Rule of right reaſon] but *Good* alſo; that is, a Rule uſeful and ſerviceable to all who follow it. A Good man is not injurious, nor ſo much as rigorouſly juſt; but (like the beſt of Beings of whom *Plato* ſaid, that there was no Envy or narrowneſs in him) diffuſive of Good will and favour towards all mankind. He is One who do's [d] τι περισσον, ſome excellent thing; ſomething more generouſly good than others, who (like the Publicans) are wont rather to *exchange*, them to *do*, good Turns. When the *Jews* perſonate ſuch a one, they introduce him ſpeaking in this proverb: *That which is thine is, for me, ſtill thy propertie; and that which is mine is thine alſo.* This is He for whom ſome other man of an upright intention, but of much meaner capacitie to ſerve his Age, would (as S. *Paul* [e] obſerveth) *even dare to die*. And certainly he who, when there is apparent hazard, ſacrificeth his own leſs profitable life, to preſerve the more uſeful one of ſome *light of Iſrael*, ſome man who is a common

[c] Rom. 7. 12.

[d] S. Matt. 5. 47.

[e] Rom. 5. 7.

mon and publick good, ſome *Hero* in generous virtue; can never fall an inglorious victim in the Eys of God or any virtuous beholder.

Having, thus, ſhew'd you who this *Good man* is who is ſo well ſpoken of in the Text, and pray'd (as I hope we All do very heartily) that God would add thouſands and ten thouſands to his Order; I come to prove,

In the Second place, that the goodneſs of ſuch a mans nature, and the bounty of his heart and hand, are always to be govern'd by Diſcretion. And this is a truth which needs no laborious proof.

For, *Firſt*, without Prudence, the circumſtances of charity cannot be meaſur'd and limited with judicious [f] eſtimation and allotment. For there are Givers of different abilities, and there are Receivers, whoſe needs are different, and whoſe merits are unequal. And the ſame kind of Alms, and the ſame meaſures are not, at all times, proper to be given or received by the ſame Perſons. And therefore, it is neceſſary that men be furniſh'd with diſcretion, by which they may be qualifi'd for the due œconomie [g] of their Alms, and diſpoſed to be *good* (or uſeful) *Stewards of the manifold grace* [h] (or temporal liberalitie) *of God.*

[f] LXX. ἐν κρίσει. Gejer. in Loc. *judicioſe.*

[g] LXX. Οἰκονομίαν.

[h] 1 Pet. 4. 10. χάρισμα. Comp. v. 9, 11.

Now

Now (*Secondly*) unleſs our charity be judiciouſly weigh'd and proportion'd, three great inconveniencies will attend it.

For (*Firſt*) without ſuch judicious eſtimation, our charity will be, often, ridiculous and indecent. Hence many have given humorous Alms, and conceited Legacies, and have made Statutes reliſhing of Monkiſh Caprice; and written *Folly*, in very legible Characters, upon the Front of their Foundations. Hence ſome, whoſe devotion ha's had Ignorance for its mother, have built Two Churches in the ſame *Incloſure* in a ſmall village; endamaging the publick ſervice of God by dividing the Aſſemblie. Hence a man otherwiſe of no ordinary Figure in the Engliſh Chronicle [i] is ſaid to have reſolved to increaſe his forty ſeven *Monaſteries* to the number of fifty, becauſe that was the number of the year of *Jubilee*. A reaſon derived from no deeper Cauſe than the pleaſure which the chime of thoſe agreeing numbers made in his weak imagination.

[i] K. Edg. vid. Hiſt. of Ref. part 1. p. 22.

Secondly; unleſs diſcretion adjuſteth and proportioneth our Alms, we ſhall do leſs good with them than is in our power. Good is to be done; and every degree of Good is Good. And though a man is not obliged to do always that which, in the abſtracted ſpeculation of it,

is

is beſt; yet true Philoſophy, as well as Theology ſeemeh to aſſure us, that *there are no ſuch things as moral Counſels which are not alſo Commands*: And that every man is bound to do whatſoever is, in his Circumſtances, beſt to be done by him, and eaſily underſtood by him to be beſt. Now how dwelleth the love of God and goodneſs in that man, who, when he may do a *greater good*, do's irrationally chuſe to do a *leſs*, by a careleſs and indiſcriminating liberality? There is a certain proportion of needs and proviſions, in the world. And, in many places of it, the proviſions do ſcarce ballance the needs. Wherefore, there is cogent reaſon for the making of our charity go as far as it can. And if it is to be done for the beſt, diſcretion muſt guide us in the performance. For what harveſt can we expect from that precious ſeed of Alms, which is either thrown on an heap, or ſcattered at all adventures, and in ſuch ſort, that the cultivated land is not diſtinguiſhed from the fallow and unbroken; that the very Rocks and high ways are ſown; and that the Birds of Prey devour that which ought to have been committed to the good ground, and to have taken root there, and to have ſprung up, from thence, for the ſuſtenance of mans indigent Nature?

I ſhould offend againſt manifeſt Truth, if I ſhould ſay, that no good can be done by indiſcreet Alms: For good is, often, done by prodigality it ſelf, of which ſome ſpoils, accidentally, fall to the lot of the wiſe and ſober. But, *the greater the Prudence, the greater the good.* And it is with Alms as with Eſtates, where half of the Riches do's conſiſt in the diſcretion of the Owner. A Judicious man will ſerve more good purpoſes with a few pence, than an imprudent man with a great number of Talents. We ſee it daily, that a competent Revenue, by good management and Gods bleſſing, ſupporteth divers Families, and divers Societies founded by charity, in very decent and comfortable manner. And S. *Chryſoſtome* [k] reporteth concerning the Church of *Antioch*, that, in his time, the ſmall Revenue of it, well apply'd, did maintain three thouſand Widows and Virgins, beſides the Clergy, the Priſoners, the Strangers, the Lepers. On the other hand, it cannot eſcape our moſt negligent obſervation, that there are ſome ſingle Perſons [ſome did I ſay? Would God they were to be eaſily numbred] who have had greater abundance in this world than many Families, and publick Foundations. And yet, by Imprudence, and by Vice (Vice which is the greateſt

[k] S. Chryſ. Hom. 67. in S. Matt.

greateſt of Indiſcretions) they have conſumed the very ſtock, and outliv'd all but the miſerable remembrance of their former plenty, and the brutiſh abuſe of it. And yet, it may be, they never did one worthy deed, nor enjoy'd themſelves as men of Honour and Condition, nor ſatisfi'd many of the moſt juſt debts: I mean ſuch as have been due either for faithful ſervice, or for the conveniences of life.

Thirdly, without judicious eſtimation, we ſhall do real dammage with our Alms; and inverting the method of the All-wiſe God (which the ſame God forbid) we ſhall *bring Evil out of Good*. By not diſtinguiſhing aright of Perſons, and their needs; we ſhall encourage vice, inſtead of relieving Poverty. We ſhall imitate ſenſual men who conſider only the craving of the vitiated appetite, and not the real health of the body. For inſtead of ſupporting, according to our power and skill, the juſt neceſſities of the Common-wealth; we ſhall be tempted, by giving ear to the clamorous importunities of the idle, the vicious, the hypocritical, to nouriſh the Plagues and feed the diſeaſes of it.

By theſe means we ſhall make it neceſſary for us to repeat this Prayer (for which there is

too frequent cauſe; though, I fear, it is very rarely uſed), 'God forgive me the prodigality of 'my Alms; God forgive me the indiſcretion of 'my Charity.

The neceſſity of Prudence in conjunction with Charity being thus, in more general manner, evinced; I proceed,

In the third place, To the more particular rules and meaſures of Religious diſcretion in relation to Alms. Theſe (I think) may be comprehended under the two following *heads*.

Firſt, Diſcretion in providing, preſerving, or increaſing wealth; that we may have ability to do good.

Secondly, Diſcretion in diſpenſing of it, that we may do it to the beſt and wiſeſt purpoſes.

Firſt, The prudence of Charity conſiſteth in that diſcretion which provideth, preſerveth, increaſeth wealth, that we may have ability to do good, and to continue in doing of it, and in bearing of ſuch uſeful fruit until we die. It is the care of every good man to be rather helpful than burthenſome. There will be always enow unavoidable neceſſities: And, therefore, he who wilfully createth more, is an unjuſt Uſurper upon the ſubſtance of the Rich, and an uncharitable diminiſher of the Alms of the Poor.

Now,

Now, towards the making of our fortune, religious Prudence preſcribeth ſuch means as theſe:

To begin with God, praying for direction and ſucceſs to that Governour of the World, to whom, after all our planting and watering, we owe the increaſe. To furniſh our ſelves with competent skill in the affairs we undertake. To be diligent in them without anxiety, which interrupteth the ſteddy thoughts of Prudence, and hangeth weights upon buſineſs. To uſe the converſation of a few familiar Friends; and of ſuch as may not rob us of our time, our ſubſtance, our innocence. To Account accurately, and often. Not to eſteem it a point of diſhonour to examine the reckonings of impoſing and unreaſonable men. Not to think it unworthy of us to bargain ſometimes (as do the Politeſt of people, the *Italians*) for our Food and our Raiment. To cut off all vain and unneceſſary, and much more all diſſolute, expence. Not to engage in equal charge with perſons of ſuperior condition and fortune. Not to go to the utmoſt criticiſm in Modes. Not to be *Trimalchio*'s and artiſts in Luxury. Not to pamper Beaſts, and ſtarve Chriſtians. To do as much with our own hands as decency, ability,

and

and innocent diverſion, will allow us. To have, as much as may be, upon our own matters, our *own Eye*, which is that auſpicious ſtar that ripeneth buſineſs by its influence, and maketh it thrive and proſper. Finally, The way to advance our ſelves in all our Dealings, is, in all of them, to be juſt and honeſt. And this was the rule even of that late Philoſopher [l] who has, I hope, been free from the crime, but not from the ſuſpicion of Atheiſm.

[l] Ren. des Cartes in Epiſt. par. 1. p. 97. ——Sitq; apud me axioma, Juſtas & honeſtas vias omnium utiliſſimas eſſe, & tutiſſimas.

But I enlarge my ſelf (I believe) too too copiouſly upon this ſubject, whilſt I ſpeak to many who underſtand the world with ſuch judicious inſight. So that, by the purſuit of ſuch an Argument, I may ſeem, as it were, to utter Proverbs before *Solomon*.

Being now, by ſuch means as have been mention'd, and by the bleſſing of God upon them, made competently able; It is our wiſdom to raiſe and maintain (as in the Church [m] a publick, ſo in our Cloſet) a *private bank of Charity*, by laying aſide a convenient ſhare of our worldly Incomes for ſo worthy a purpoſe. It will grow inſenſibly: the Oyl will riſe in ſurprizing manner in the Cruiſe. And this being done, we ſhall then not be to ſeek for Alms upon ſudden and emergent occaſions; we ſhall have

[m] V. Tertul. Apol. C. 39. p. 31. Etiam ſi quod Arcæ genus, &c.

have a ſtore for daily needs; we ſhall be unwilling to alienate or to imbezzle that which we have devoted to ſo laudable, ſo ſacred an uſe; we ſhall always give with chearfulneſs, having by us a ſtock deſigned to no other end than that of Charity: So neceſſary towards the furniture of a Religious Cloſet, where a mans circumſtances can allow it, is a *private Corban.*

Diſcretion having, thus, in ſome meaſure either made or continued Proviſion for Alms; there is great need

(*In the Second place*) of its further Care in the diſtribution and wiſe application of it, that Charity may attain its bleſſed Ends.

Now diſcretion, in diſtributing of Alms, hath due regard to "*The Scope, the Objects, the Place, the* "*Seaſon, the Quality, the meaſure and proportion of this* "*material Charity*; *and to the manner of its conveyance.*

Firſt, Prudence hath due regard to the *ſcope* of Charity, a failure in which, is an error in the foundation. For that which is given without reſpect to the Glory of God who gave us all, and to the relief of real needs in humane Societies, is expence indeed, but it is not Charity. It is wealth Expoſed, but not Beſtow'd. And when we give for no worthier end than the

the ſerving our humour, Pride, and Vanity, it is not at all probable that we ſhall place our Alms upon the moſt deſerving. For, The bold, the talkative, the clamorous, the frequenters of publick places, will then be judged the fitteſt Inſtruments to blazon our praiſe, and to flatter our hypocriſie. If our ſcope be the ſake of God and the common good, that will direct us in the due application of our Alms to a purpoſe ſo fit to be our aim.

There is great boaſt made of Alms in the Romiſh Church. They ſound the Trumpet of them perpetually in our Ears. But what is the End to which a great part of this charity tendeth? Frequently the motive which perſwades them is extreamly ſelfiſh, and the means they uſe are extravagantly indiſcreet. The ſcope they too often vainly aim at, is *The bleſſing of a preſumed Saint* who is ignorant of them; *Security* from the external force of *evil Spirits* by the charms and ſpells of Monkiſh Conjuration, (A ſort of Eccleſiaſtical Magick which thoſe very Spirits invent and incourage); Avoidance of thoſe cauſeleſs *Curſes* and *Anathema's* which are with terror denounced from their ſeven-hill'd counterfeit *Sinai*; preſervation from, or deliverance out of, the imaginary flames of *Purgatory*, blown on

on purpoſe by Jeſuitick breath for the melting of the treaſures of credulous people; *Canonization*, as ſcandalous as it is chargeable, and performed in ſuch manner, that, according to the note of *Cardinal Beſſarion*, the making of their *new Saints*, doth move ſome ſceptical men to queſtion the *old ones*. Nay, ſometimes, the ſcope is that very wicked one of compounding with heaven, by their liberal Alms, for their unforſaken ſins: and here in this Nation (whilſt the Iſland was enchanted with Popery) there were granted Indulgences even for what they call deadly ſins for many thouſands of years to come.

[a] Horæ B. M. v. ad Uſ. Sar. fol. 66.— who that devoutly ſay [theſe three Prayers] ſhall obtain ten hundred thouſand years of pardon for *deadly ſins* granted by our holy Father *John* 22[d] P. of *R.*

The Event is, The alienation of Alms from their proper uſes, the increaſe of Superſtition, and the maintaining of an univerſal Uſurper. For the Pence of S. *Peter* conduced to the buying of ſuch a yoke as neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear.

The things they purchaſe as conducive to theſe ends, are the wares of dark impoſture; namely ſuch as theſe. *Shrines*, *Images*, *Lamps*, *Incenſe*, *Holy-water*, *Agnus Dei's*, *Bleſſed Grains*, *Roſes*, *Peebles*, *Rings*, *Beads*, *Reliques*, *Pardons*, *Maſſes*, *Dirige's* and *Soul-obits*; the goodly Inventory of Superſtition.

Bleſſed God! what a miſerable and irrational waſte is this? what great good might have been done by the wealth laid out upon ſuch unprofitable and ſuch dangerous Toys, with the prophane Merchandizers in the Romiſh Temple? how many real neceſſities might have been ſupplyed by the many hundreds of pounds yearly offer'd at that one *Shrine* of the pretended *Martyr of Canterbury*? how many hungry perſons might have been fed; how many good men, bound in miſery and iron, might have been ſet at Liberty by ſuch Popiſh indiſcreet Alms, ſquandred ſo fruitleſly, and levell'd at a Scope to which Chriſtianity did never direct?

Secondly, diſcretion duly conſidereth the proper *objects* of Chriſtian Charity; that dogs may not devour the bread of Children.

The Objects which I ſhall ſpeak of, are,

Firſt, thoſe more *Publick ones* of common Societies and charitable Foundations.

Secondly, thoſe more *Private ones* of particular Families and Perſons.

Firſt, touching thoſe more Publick Objects, Societies founded by Charity; I ſhall, at preſent, make only theſe few Reflexions upon them.

Firſt, I obſerve (which is obvious enough) that

that it is an imprudent and irreligious liberality, which erecteth ſuch Publick Houſes and Societies, as pleaſe private Imagination, but diſſerve the Publick Intereſt. True Charity erecteth not ſuch *Sanctuaries* as are too common in Romiſh Countries; ſuch as are Refuges for wilful and capital malefactors. It foundeth not ſuch *Monaſteries* as are nurſeries of a blind and formal way of worſhip: A kind of worſhip ſo very ritual, that the intention of the mind (unleſs it be of his who Officiates) is the leaſt part of it. It favoureth not ſuch *Convents* as receive, for term of life, the young, the ſtrong, the able and apt for buſineſs, even againſt the deſires, endeavours, importunities of their Parents, under pretence of teaching them to ſerve God with greater perfection. The Romaniſts frequently object to us that *Statute* which was made, in the *Queens* time, in favour of the poor: and they reproach us in a Proverb, ſaying, that *begging began with Proteſtancy*. But they ſhould do well to uſe leſs partiality in their Cenſures, and to conſider this plain truth, that the indiſcretion of the *Monaſticks* (by feeding the ſlothful, the ſuperſtitious, the Enthuſiaſtick, the Fryars Mendicants, the Pilgrims or loytering wanderers of that Church) provided objects of burthen and expence, for thoſe of

the Reformation. And who (I beſeech you) were moſt in fault, thoſe who *bred* the Beggars; or thoſe, who, finding them in great neceſſities, made a Law to keep them that they might not periſh?

Laſtly (not to ſpare our ſelves where there is a failure) true Charity do's not countenance ſuch *places of exemption*, as, by their private priviledge, do not ſupport the Government by ſupporting the neceſſary Officers of State and Juſtice, in honour and without diſturbance: ſuch places into which the Law ha's reaſon to enter, yet (which is matter of juſt aſtoniſhment) no legal Authority.

Secondly, I obſerve, that it is much more probable that the publick Charities of the *Reformed* ſhould ſerve the publick Intereſt, than thoſe of the *Roman* faction. Among the truly Reformed, ſuch Societies are founded upon the impulſe of plain, and prudent, and rational Cauſes. To wit, that God may have a publick, reaſonable ſervice offered to him. That Children may be educated for offices Eccleſiaſtical, Civil, Military Mechanick. That offenders may be corrected, or ſecured. That the idle may be employed. That the aged, the impotent, the wounded, the ſick, the diſtracted;

may

may have relief, ſhelter, cure and overſight.

But in the Church of *Rome*, the firſt motive to many Foundations is ſome pretended Viſion or Revelation from God or a Saint. And by this means it comes to paſs that ſometimes fraud is a founder, and hyſterick vapour (paſſing for Oracle) a Benefactor. And in ſuch Places Enthuſiaſm is dutifully nurſed and fed by thoſe Societies, which owe to it their birth and original. The occaſion of them is fanciſull, and the ſcope of them is an indiſcreet (not to ſay an Idolatrous) end. Thus it came to paſs in the ſeveral Houſes of their celebrated S. *Tereſa* the *Foundreſs of the Reformation of the diſcalced Carmelites.* I will give you her own words [o] with reſpect to her firſt Foundation of the Monaſtery of *Avila*.

[o] Life of S. Tereſa. 2d part. p. 2, 3.

"One day (ſaith *Tereſa*) after I had commu-
"nicated, our Lord ſtrictly charg'd me to ſet
"about this Foundation with all my might,
"making me great promiſes, that the Monaſte-
"ry ſhould not fail to be erected; that his
"divine Majeſty ſhould be very much ſerved
"in it: that it ſhould bear the title of S. *Joſeph*,
"who ſhould ſtand at one Gate for our guard,
"and our Lady, the glorious Virgin his Mother,
"at the other; and that himſelf would ſtand al-
"ways in our Company.—That I ſhould tell my
Confeſſor

" Confeſſor this, which his Majeſty had enjoyn-
" ed me; and that he willed him not to oppoſe
" or hinder me at all.

You ſee what Hay and Stubble is at the bottom of ſuch buildings: and therefore, ifthe ſuperſtructure be ſolid, and it be advanced and perfected by that great moral Architect, Prudence, it is a miracle ſcarce inferiour to any which their *Legends* have fitted to the wide ſwallow of their people. But if Diſcretion does not ſucceed *Enthuſiaſm*, and correct it, what aids can be given, by ſo irregular and extravagant a principle, to the common good?

Thirdly, It may at leaſt be *offered* to conſideration, whether Prudence would not judge it conducive to the publick intereſt, both of Religion and Civil order, if there were *places of retirement*, rightly conſtituted (without Maſſes, Images, Litanies to Saints, Cords of diſcipline, or any other inſtruments of Superſtition) for the uſe of men of *leſs ſound temper*, though their diſeaſe be not perfect diſtraction. Theſe (one would imagine) might be fit retreats for the penſive, the melancholy, the male-content, the inordinately ſcrupulous, the fearful, the reſerved, the muſing, the indiſcreetly zealous, the fierce diſputers of this world; the vain janglers, who

who diſturb peace and entangle truth: in ſumm, for the many who are not qualify'd for diſpatch of buſineſs, or for freedom of converſation. By this means, penſiveneſs might be chang'd into godly ſorrow; and diſcontent at the world, into ſelf-denial; and that Religious fury which now rageth in the very ſtreets, into private Devotion.

But I ſay this with ſubmiſſion, and not with aſſurance: As alſo that there is a publick Charity in nature and dignity before this; a due ſupport of Gods publick ſervice in all places of this Kingdom by ſuch a maintenance as is not ſcandalous and inſufficient. And thus far, ever ſince there was a prize put into publick hands at the diſſolution of ſuperſtitious Houſes, there has been part of a debt due from the *State* unto the *Church*; which God grant it may have ability and opportunity, and religious inclination to diſcharge.

Laſtly, I cannot but take notice, upon this ſolemn memoria lof your publick Charities, of that ſingular Prudence which do's appear both in the founding, and in the managing, of the *Hoſpitals* of this illuſtrious *City*. The good ends to which they were ſo wiſely deſign'd, and the diligent, prudent, and ſucceſsful purſuance of thoſe ends,

ought

ought not to be paſſed by with ſupine and ungrateful inadvertence.

In this paſt year, there have been put forth *Apprentices*, and diſcharged out of *Chriſts Hoſpital*, *Seventy ſix* Children. There remain, under the care of it, *five hundred fourty ſeven.* And the number taken in, ſince the erection of it, has been about *Twelve Thouſand*, of which many have proved eminent in divers faculties, and in Offices Sacred and Civil, and arriv'd at great things from very low beginnings. Ten of the formention'd Children have been, this year, placed out to Maſters of Ships, having firſt been educated in the Arts of *Arithmetick* and *Navigation* by the Royal bounty of his moſt *Excellent Majeſty*, whoſe great and wiſe example ought highly to be honoured, and diligently to be purſu'd by the people of this Iſland, which God and Nature have deſign'd, by its ſituation, for Sea-affairs; I had almoſt ſaid, for the ſoveraignty of the Ocean.

There have been Cured, this laſt year, in the *Hoſpital* of St *Bartholomew*, nigh *Sixteen Hundred* perſons, of which many were partakers, alſo, of other relief convenient for them.

The like Charity has been extended to more than *Eighteen hundred* in the *Hoſpital* of St *Thomas.*

There

There have been received into the *Hoſpital* of *Bridewell* nigh *Nine Hundred* perſons fit to be diſciplin'd into good manners. And it hath brought up, in divers Arts and Trades, no leſs than *One Hundred twenty eight.* And all this has been done, notwithſtanding theſe *Foundations* have, ſo deeply, ſuffer'd by the dreadful calamity of *Fire*; the remainder of whoſe rage God, in mercy, reſtrain; that this great *City* may never mourn a ſecond time ſitting in Aſhes; unleſs it be in thoſe of Humiliation.

I ought not, here, to forget the *Hoſpital* of *Bethlem*, that ſanctuary of unſound minds, dwelling unhappily in unſound bodies. It hath, this year, received *fifty three* perſons diſtempered in their imaginations. It hath Cured of Lunacy, and diſcharged *Forty one*; and it maintaineth under Cure a *Hundred and ten*; notwithſtanding that great burthen of debt there is upon it, by reaſon of that noble and commodious ſtructure lately erected.

Happy the miſerable who partake of this Charity; more happy they, who out of hearty love to God and Man, have raiſed the ſeveral funds of it: as alſo they who, with pious liberality, build further upon them.

But I forbear to diſcourſe more at large, con-

cerning ſuch publick Charities, in this place, where it appeareth, by the fruits of the management, that they are ſo well underſtood, and ſo prudently governed.

I paſs to the

Second ſort of charitable objects, thoſe more private ones of miſerable Families, or Perſons. And here, diſcretion conſidereth that theſe words of
[p] S. Matt. 5. 42. the Lord Jeſus [p] [*give to him that asketh*] are, by the Laws of reaſon, and by other pious Rules in Holy Scripture, to be, thus, expounded. "Be charitable to every one, even to thoſe "who have done thee injury, if thou judgeſt, in "*general*, that they are fit objects; and, in *ſpe*-"*cial*, that they are proper objects of *thy* Alms. No man is, by the moſt luxuriant growth of Riches, made al-ſufficient. The needs of a ſmall Precinct in the world will ſoon exhauſt even the Rich Man of *Craſſus*, who would not reckon any one in that number, who was not able to maintain an Army. Seeing, then, we cannot benefit all the world by our Alms, (though we may do it by our charitable Prayers for them;) it is fit that the little portion, which we are maſters of, be placed upon thoſe, whoſe circumſtances are beſt ſuited to our own. Objects ſo particularly fit, are thoſe in our Church,

Church, our Family, our Neighbourhood; in the places of our Birth, our Baptiſm, our Education, our Office, our Revenue, our ſpiritual aſſiſtance, our temporal deliverance or advancement.

Amongſt theſe objects fitted to our perſonal circumſtance, diſcretion encourageth thoſe onely who are likewiſe fitted for our Charity by their own juſt qualifications.

Prudence, therefore, diſcountenanceth thoſe who are *irreligious and prophane*, and never uſe the Name of Chriſt with ſhew of reverence, but when they ask an Alms with it: who will not follow Chriſt unleſs there be Loaves to tempt them. It diſcourageth thoſe who have been *early Beggars*, and have ſacrificed the very flower and ſtrength of their Age to idleneſs: Who, being accuſtomed to ſloth, are more reconciled to ſhameful Poverty than honeſt labour. Who tell us, falſly and abſurdly, that it is as good to be idle for nothing, as to work for nothing. As if there were not *profit in all labour*: As if ſloth did not diſable both mind and body: As if the mere employing of our time with diligence, did not ſecure us from many temptations. And certainly none have fallen into more, and into more perilous ſnares, than

they who, from the beginning, have trodden the ways of unmanly lazineſs and unjuſt begging.

Again, Prudence giveth no countenance to the *over confident*, who ſtand in need of ſuch diſcipline as may humble them into a deeper and more becoming ſenſe of their miſerable and low condition; whoſe impudence, adding menaces to their intreaties, giveth us cauſe to ſuſpect concerning them, that they would extort thoſe Alms by force (were it in their power) which now they endeavour to wreſt by their boldneſs from timerous men, and from the eaſie-natured by their importunity.

Likewiſe, diſcretion repulſeth the *craving and unſatisfy'd*, who muſt have benefits cover'd daily with benefits, or elſe a ſhower of their imprecations will find paſſage through them. Theſe would monopolize Charity, as if *they* were the only objects on Earth; as if the comfortable dew of it were not well directed, if a drop of it fell beſides their private fleece.

It diſcourageth, alſo, the *diſſolute and riotous* [9], who turn the Alms of the day, into the revels of the night: who are not eaſie 'till by expenſive intemperance they have unburthen'd themſelves

[9] Tertul. Apol. c. 39. p. 31. *Hæc quaſi depoſita pietatis ſunt; nam indè non epulis, nec potaculis, nec ingratis voratrinis diſpenſatur; ſed egenis alendis humandiſque, & pueris ac puellis re ac parentibus deſtitutis, jamq; domeſticis ſenibus, item naufragis: & ſiqui in metallis, & ſiqui in inſulis vel in Cuſtodiis, dumtaxat ex causâ dei ſectæ, alumni confeſſionis ſuæ fiunt.*

ſelves of the little ſtock they have gathered. Amongſt theſe, it ſetteth its face even againſt that ſort of men who are for a ſeaſon, very laborious. They will, for a while, endure the heat of the day with honeſt and painful diligence. They will be frugal and ſober 'till a ſumm is earned: and then it is not laid up for the ſupport of their Family, and againſt they themſelves fail through impotence and Age; but the wages of ſome weeks are all riotouſly waſted in a few hours; and they uſe them as their thorns which, after a growth of ſome conſiderable time, make a blaze and crackling for a few moments.

Furthermore, both Religious and Civil prudence refuſeth to favour *wanderours*, who are, oftentimes, pernicious ſpies and conveighers of unlawful Intelligence; who, in all places where they have opportunity, leave behind them the marks of their wickedneſs and diſhoneſty; who dare not lead their unwarrantable lives in any fixed abode, where the Government may take a true account of their behaviour under it.

Finally, Diſcretion weigheth well the caſe of *pretended Converts*, leſt, after the modern *Policy of France* *, it ſetteth up a Market for *Converſions*, and expoſeth Religion to ſale in a mercenary world, where divers will turn their Conſcience to

* See *Pol. of the French* Clergy, to deſtroy the Proteſtants, *&c.* p. 151, *&c.* p. 204, *&c.*

to that point from whence proſperity bloweth. It is exceeding tender of all thoſe, who, for Chriſts ſake, quit their Countries, their ſtations, their falſe Religion. But, if it ſees any conſiderable ſpot in the Morals of ſuch who go under this character, it fears, for the ſake of the ſame Bleſſed Jeſus (whoſe Religion is too Divine to cover baſe and carnal purpoſes) to give them encouragement. It muſt be a mighty love of God, and a deep ſenſe of Chriſtian Piety which will force a man, for mere Conſcience ſake, to die, as it were, whilſt he is alive; to forſake the beloved Land of his Nativity, his dear Relations, his profitable employs, and to *follow Jeſus whitherſoever he goes*, be it to *Pilates* Tribunal, or to *Calvary*. Wherefore, he who pretends to have forſaken *all* that he may adhere to the Crucify'd Jeſus, and leads not a life very exemplary, and of remarkeable circumſpection; awakens the jealouſie of the Prudent, and gives them ſigns of his inſincerity.

Thirdly, Diſcretion hath regard to *the place* in which Charity is fitly diſpenſed. *It giveth*, ſometimes, very *publickly*, for Example ſake, and ſometimes very *privately* for Love ſake, and as a ſign to our ſelves of our freedom from vain-glory. *It hath not a conſtant door* for a promiſcuous,

ſcuous, bold, contentious crowd; but chuſeth rather to conveigh its Alms to the houſes of the needy, than to tempt them abroad daily, to the expence of their time, and modeſty, and innocence; and the neglect of their Family and buſineſs.

Again, Prudence raiſeth not a *great bank*, by all the Alms it hath ability to give, for the behoof of ſome *narrow Precinct*, whoſe neceſſities require not ſuch redundancy of ſupply. That will but bring burthen, inſtead of maintenance. For in this ſence, alſo, our Lords ſaying is true, *Where the Carcaſs is, there will the Eagles be gather'd together.* Prudence (to uſe the words of a great man * from whom it is no ſhame to borrow) *diſtributeth the remedy as the Diſeaſe is diſperſed. Greatneſs of relief accumulate in one place, doth rather invite a ſwarm and ſurcharge of poor, than relieve thoſe that are naturally bred in that place: Like to ill temper'd Medicines, that draw more humour to the part, than they evacuate from it.*

* Lord *Bacon* in his Advice touching Mr. *Sutton's* Eſtate, in *Reſuſc.* p. 199.

Again, where Diſcretion findeth the needy actually in their miſeries, or in their labour and induſtry, there it conceiveth it hath a *fit place* offer'd to it for the depoſiting of its Alms.

For the publick Streets and Avenues to Churches, the prudent are very ſparing towards thoſe

thoſe confederate and immodeſt Petitioners, who perpetually haunt them. They fear to turn their Charity into a blaze of glory. They expect little fruit from that which they ſcatter upon the ſtones. They will not be impoſed upon, or forc'd, by thoſe bold people who are, on purpoſe, importunate in ſuch publick places, where they think men will be ſham'd, at leaſt, into bounty towards them.

Fourthly, Diſcretion conſidereth the *time of giving Alms*. It hath reſpect to the ſeaſons of great Sickneſs, of great loſſes, of ſcarceneſs of Work, and of dearneſs of Proviſions. It hath eſpecial regard to diligent men juſt ſinking in their fortune, who may, often, be kept above water by a very little help, when a hand is opportunely reached towards them. It aſſiſteth at the beginning of *Arreſts*, where timely aid delivers men from perpetual chains. It giveth as *ſoon* as it ſeeth a fit object, not ſuffering the Chriſtian to pine away whilſt the Charity is growing. It placeth out to Maſters the *Children of the Poor*, as ſoon as ever they are capable of work or inſtruction. By ſuch means it preventeth new Families of Beggars; it puts the Children into a capacity of being helpful to their Parents; it ſecures their innocence, by preventing the

the very beginnings of begging which are dangerous. For there ſeemeth to be a kind of inchantment in that evil Trade; and few who are enter'd are made to forſake it even by hardſhip it ſelf.

Furthermore, As to time, prudence hath an eſpecial eye upon the *ſeaſons of* mens *ſetting up* in honeſt Callings; giving them ſome place of footing where they may ſtand. At ſuch times, a ſmall ſumm is a greater Charity, than the liberality of the openeſt hand, when the *way* of the perſon is more fixed, and his circumſtances are ripened into ſome degrees of proſperity.

Likewiſe, Diſcreet charity is liberal at thoſe *ſolemn times* when the Church celebrateth the memorials of the *Birth*, the *Paſſion*, the *Reſurrection*, the *Aſcenſion* of the Saviour of the world; and the *deſcent* of the Holy *Spirit* of God: or, when it obſerveth publick *Faſts*; or other daies of *Thankſgiving*, beſides thoſe already remembred: that ſo our giving of Alms may be an *act* and a *ſign* alſo, both of our humanity and our Devotion.

Again, If there be *abſolute neceſſity*, wiſdom judgeth that time, a ſeaſon for aſſiſtance, even of the perſonally unworthy. If it hath power, it will pull out of the ditch the periſhing Goat

or Swine. It knoweth that *extremity* will give violent counſel, and that men, in ſuch circumſtances, will force a way to their relief, if they cannot find one.

Laſt of all, Wiſdom turneth not all Alms into Legacies; it doth not adjourn all its Charity to the *laſt Will*, which is, ſometimes, never made but in a vain purpoſe, and, as often, not fulfill'd.

Fifthly, Diſcretion conſidereth the *quality of our Alms*. And here, it is our prudence to prefer thoſe which ſerve towards a *conſtant* proviſion, before thoſe which are *tranſient*: thoſe, I mean, which help a man in a pang of need, but put him not into a *way of living*; which juſt hold him up from periſhing, for an hour, but do not take him out of the deep waters. Wiſdom, alſo, perſwadeth always to give *ſuitable ſupplies*, and not mere counſel when bread is wanting. And it perſwadeth to give ſuch ſuitable ſupplies (if it conſiſteth with our convenience) rather *in kind*, than in that which will purchaſe them; as Cloaths to the naked, and Food to the hungry, and Books to the uninſtructed, and Phyſick to the ſick. Money can anſwer all theſe needs, but it will not be always laid out upon them. And for ſome materials of Charity, diſcretion

cretion does purchaſe them from *Work-houſes* for the poor; at the ſame time doubling the good, by encourageing diligence and adminiſtring ſupply.

Sixthly, Diſcretion conſidereth the *due meaſure* and proportion of Alms, that it be fitted to the *needs* of the *receiver*, and to the *ability* of the *giver*.

Touching the needs of the receiver, it doth not always limit it ſelf to mere neceſſity; but, in perſons whoſe fortunes are, by loſs and accident, in declenſion, it hath reſpect to decence; conſidering how great the fall is from Riches to Poverty. And, in men always poor, but always in hard labour, and able only to refreſh life with the continual ſweat of their brows; it pitieth the heavineſs of their yoke. It ſometimes ſweetneth their ſlaviſh eſtate by ſome addition to the wages of their drudgery; and alloweth them ſome *Sabbath* for the eaſe of humane nature.

Touching the ability of the giver, diſcretion conſidereth what we juſtly poſſeſs, and what quantity of it is required for the ſupporting of us in the condition of our birth, our place, our office, our family, and for the diſcharge of our obligations. It doth not require of all the ſame proportion. Some may afford a twentieth, and

others a thirtieth part: and to others, whoſe Children and dependents are numerous, and whoſe fortunes are entangled, the hundredth part may be over meaſure. According as the heap is, ſo the wiſe man ſoweth. Religious Prudence does not pull down one Family for the ſupport of another. But for raiſing of a *new Family* to worldly grandeur (eſpecially where the heirs of it are not encouragers of our hope, either by the quickneſs of their parts, or the virtuouſneſs of their tempers, or the goodneſs of their educations) the wiſdom of charity does not preſs it with earneſtneſs. This is a deſign of no great uſe, but of great uncertainty. The Family of *Herod* [a] was all extinct in a ſingle century of years. And it is noted by the Author of the *Baronage* [b] *of England*, that, of the 270 Families of which he treats, there were not, when he wrote, above *eight* remaining. And yet, a great many imprudent men live all their daies in unbecoming parſimony, and without doing good ſo much as to their ſelves, for the advancing of ſome mean man, born to labour and low eſtate, and uncapable of any thing greater than that which he is already. And ſuch a one is ruin'd by his preferment. *Galba* ſaid the honeſt truth of himſelf, when he told his Friends, That *they had*

[a] Joſeph. Ant. l. 18. c. 7. Et R. R. Uſſerii Annal. A. 4079.

[b] Sir *W. Dugd.* Pref. to Vol. 1. p. 7.

had spoil'd a good Souldier, and made the worst of Emperours.

Lastly, Discretion hath regard to the due *manner* of dispensing Charity; obliging both by *what* it gives, and by *the way of giving*. It giveth *not grudgingly, or of necessity*, but with signs of a free and willing heart. It findeth out, privately, just needs, and it preventeth asking, and surprizeth with a kindness, for which the needy did not look. And this strengthens their faith in the providence of God who createth friends to them out of the dust; who bringeth them supply without and beyond their expectation. Wherefore when prudence giveth, it doth it without malicious upbraiding or proud insulting. When a miserable creature *would borrow* [or, beg] *of him*, it *turneth not him away* [c]. That is, it does not remove him to a distance, with signs of disdain, and contemptuous violence. It oppresseth not the modesty of the humble; especially of those who have been wont to give and not to receive. To the more confident it giveth with a mixture of governance and favour, that they neither be encouraged in insolence, nor driven to desperation.

[c] S. Matt. 5. 42. μὴ ἀποστραφῇς. i. e. τὸ θέλοντα ἀπὸ σοῦ δανείσασθαι.

Having said all this touching the *necessity*, and the *nature*, of *discretion in giving Alms*, (and all, with

with reference to the further judgment and definition of a prudent man, when a particular caſe does lie before him;) It remaineth,

In the laſt place, That I exhort both *to Charity it ſelf, and to the prudent exerciſe of it.*

Firſt, I beſeech you, be ye *willing to give, and glad to diſtribute.* Conſider that power to do good, is a dangerous ability, unleſs we uſe it. Remember that it is God who giveth wealth, and that he expecteth ſome anſwerable returns of it. Live not in ſuch inhumane manner, as if *Nabal* and *Judas* were come again into the world. Think frequently and warmly of the love of God and Jeſus to you. You will not deny your crumbs to the miſerable, when you thankfully call to mind that Chriſt gave, for you, his very fleſh and his blood. Conſider that, as one great end of Poverty is Patience, ſo one great end of Wealth is Charity. Think how honourable it is to make a *preſent* to the great King of the world; And what a condeſcenſion it is in his Alſufficiency to do that good by us, which he could, ſo abundantly, do without us. Forget not that *you your ſelves are in the body*; and that you know not what calamities may fall down upon the Earth, and what relief from others you may ſtand in need of. And let this be one

of

of your daily thoughts, that, according to your Charity, the ſentence of doomſday will paſs upon you.

Secondly, When you give Alms, do not offer the ſacrifice of the indiſcreet, which, it ſelf, needeth atonement. Be not uncharitable by your charity. Add not to other evils, the *great grievance* of a numerous unmannag'd Poor. Remove, as far as in you lies, the reproach of a late ſharp Writer [d], who ſays, in effect, of the people of *England*, that they generally uſe a kind of *mother-wit*; and have the generoſity to do *great things*, but not the diſcretion to do them *wiſely*.

[d] *J. M.* Char. p. 10.

Now, that our Charity may be diſcreet, let us,

Firſt, Exerciſe our minds with good *compaſs of thought*. He that regardeth only a few things, ſhall never arrive at Prudence. It is neceſſary for a man to conſider his own condition, to view objects of Charity with a ſtrict and judicious Eye, and to look round about them in all the circumſtances which attend them. The imprudent behold a ſhew of miſery, and conſider no further; and, by one motive, are prodigal of thoſe Alms, from the miſapplying of which many other Arguments would have diſ-

ſwaded

ſwaded them. *Plotinus* [c] denieth *that there is prudence in God*, meaning it of that wiſdom which needeth conſultation [f]. But it is not with man as it is with God, whoſe *will* is his *wiſdom*. Man knoweth but few things, and cannot arrive at diſcretion without ſtudy. And it is worth his labour to ſtudy the art of knowing men, by inquiry and obſervation; that he may ſecure his Charity from the wiles of the fraudulent: and not be abuſed by fictitious needs, and deceive himſelf into a dangerous conceit that *he lends to the Lord*, when he gives to thoſe who, ſometimes, *put out their very Alms to Intereſt*. And, by degrees, a man will obſerve a *certain Air* in ungodly *mendicants*, which (as great Maſters as they are in the art) they cannot eaſily diſſemble. It is, indeed, poſſible for the wiſeſt and moſt cautious obſerver to be, ſometimes, miſtaken. But then he hath this ſatisfaction in his mind, that he was not acceſſary to the impoſture: and it is certain that they who are the blindeſt, are the ſooneſt miſled.

But blind we ſhall be, and daily miſled, unleſs, in

The ſecond place, We avoid ſlothful and eaſie *credulity*. *Covetouſneſs* will require, as an excuſe, and as a way of ſaving its beloved Money, very rigid

[c] Plotin. Enn. 1. l. 2. p. 11.

[f] φρόνησιν μὲν οὐκ εἰ τὸ λογιζόμενον, &c.

rigid demonſtration, e're it giveth. On the other hand, *credulity* will be ſatisfy'd without tolerable proof, and take a lewd man's *aſſeveration* for an *argument*. It behaveth it ſelf towards the tales of Beggars, as it doth towards thoſe of idle Pamphlets: Though it be, one day, groſsly deceived by them, it will truſt them the next that follows. And where there is ſuch blind truſt, the idle will multiply petitions and pretences. They will tell them they have *ſuffered* deeply by *ſuretyſhip*, though they never had the credit to get into Bonds. They will profeſs that they have *ſuffered* extremely *by fire*, though they be of that number of barbarous Thieves, who will ſet their Neighbours houſe on a flame, that they may the more ſecurely ſhare in his goods. The credulous will be deceived by thoſe very appearances which would undeceive them, if they would uſe any competent reflection, and had not a kindneſs for the ſcales on their Eyes. I mean *the naked arms and breaſts of Mendicants* in ſharp ſeaſons; and their lying in the Mire, and on the Pavements, day after day. Now, what a ſtrength of nature is this which is not injur'd by thoſe cuſtomary ſeeming hardſhips, which would deſtroy the lives of many who are in ſound and perfect health;

and who were not bred to tenderneſs but labour?

Thirdly, For the adminiſtring of Charity with Prudence, it is neceſſary that even *piety of inclination* be directed by it. It is ſtoried of Mr. *Fox*, the Author of the *Engliſh Martyrology*, that he could deny no man who asked of him an Alms *in the name of Jeſus*. His Piety is to be highly valued; but, ſurely, the weakneſs of it is not to be drawn into imitation. For multitudes uſe *that name*, to whom if we are liberal we offend our Saviour, who will ſay to them at the final judgment, *Depart from me, I know you not* [*or will not own you as my Diſciples*] *ye workers of iniquity.*

Fourthly, *Superſtition* is to be removed, that Charity may have its perfect work. *In the Eaſtern Countries*, it feedeth Dogs, and other ſuch Creatures, with proviſions much more convenient for men; conceiting that it is, thereby, charitable to the ſouls of ſome of their departed Foreſathers, which are wander'd into the bodies of thoſe beaſts. In thoſe, and in *divers other parts of the world*, it erecteth Convents for *Will-worſhip*, and fixeth *Romiſh Emiſſaries* in ſuch *poſts*, that they may give diſturbance to reformed Chriſtendom. In ſumm, it can do nothing diſcreetly,

ſcreetly, being the iſſue of reverence overſtrained, and of devout imagination heated into madneſs.

Fifthly, That Charity may be prudent, let us avoid all *pride* of heart which dealeth out the meaſures of it to the unqualifyed and unworthy. It would buy off the clamour of *their* tongues whoſe credit is ſo low that it can give no authority to their ſlanders. It fears the *calumny* of *penuriouſneſs*, which will not *ſtick* long upon any man, who is not ſparing in any other caſe, where he may be *juſtly liberal*, and not proſtitute his Riches. It would bribe the mercenary throats of vile people, into the flattering ſounds of, *good Man*, *brave Houſe-keeper*, and *bountiful Maſter*. *Wretched ambition*, which loveth the praiſe of licentious Mendicants, more than the ſuffrage of Conſcience and the praiſe of God!

Sixthly, Let us arm our ſelves with *Chriſtian courage*, that the menaces, and revengeful looks of the ſturdy and deſperate, may not affright us into a miſplacing of our Alms. God will protect us in well-doing againſt all their cauſeleſs threats and imprecations. And whether is it better, to fear the looſe tongue of an ungodly man, or a dreadful thunderbolt from the juſt hand of Heaven?

Seventhly, Let us conquer *fooliſh pity* and irrational compaſſion. That affection is put into men by nature, to keep their reaſon from languiſhing, and not to pervert it. Yet it is daily ſuffered to do this diſſervice in caſes of Charity. There is doleful clamour in the *ear*, and a ſhew of extream miſery before the *eye*; and this raiſes, by mere *mechanick force*, *a pang* in the heart. And nothing maketh the impreſſion, but an appearance of ſadneſs in the object. The image of it is dreadful; but men under the dominion of paſſion, conſider not whether it be a real miſery, or a fiction, and a kind of ſpectre of Poverty. They examine not whether all this, if real, is not the effect of vice and ſloth; and whether induſtry could not ſupply thoſe needs for which ther Alms are ask'd, in a *careful tone*, formed, on purpoſe, to move compaſſion. But to eaſe this preſent *pang* in their *bowels*, they give at adventure, and thereby put a thorn into their *Conſcience*. Some of the *Primitive Chriſtians* [g], out of the abundance of their compaſſion, gave Alms unwarily to many crafty *Heathens*, who knew their weakneſs, and ſerv'd themſelves upon it. And by this means, thoſe leſs prudent Chriſtians increaſed the Riches and the power of the Enemies of their perſons and their Holy Religion.

[g] V. Lucian. de Morte Peregrin.

There

There are many who have either none of the miſeries which they feign, or none which they would part with. In ſome, loud ſighs, and deep groans, and flowing tears, and paſſionate complaints, are all counterfeit and artificial. And if they move *your hearts*, they have more influence upon them, than they have upon *their own*. It is ſaid of two Beggars [h] who had a deſign upon the Charity of *Epiphanius Biſhop of Salamine*; that, to move his pity, one feign'd himſelf dead, and the other ſtood weeping and mourning over him. There are many who are reconciled to very ill circumſtances, as pretences to beg with. They would not part with their Ulcers, their ſcarrs, their Crutches, leſt they part with their idleneſs and their Alms. By ſuch ways they extort that from the tenderneſs of mens hearts, which the firmneſs of their reaſon would have preſerved from abuſe. But, alaſs! This Charity which ſpringeth from ſuch ſoft temper as cannot bear up againſt any thing that looks like Tragedy, does not deſerve the name of that Grace; nor ſhall it have its reward. For it gives indiſcreetly *for its own eaſe*, and not to pleaſe God in the relief of juſt neceſſities. If this fooliſh compaſſion may be called Charity, the weeping at diſaſters of perſons in

[h] Soz. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 7. c. 27.

in Romance, may challenge the name of Chriſtian pity.

Theſe means, then, let us diligently uſe, that the wiſdom of our minds may guide the liberality of our hands.

So ſhall we juſtifie our ſelves to our own reaſon; *ſo* ſhall we beſt promote the common good; ſo ſhall we imitate the great and all-wiſe God, who *is good and does good*, and does all things *in number and weight and meaſure*. So ſhall we *provide for our ſelves, bags which wax not old, and lay up for our ſelves an enduring treaſure in the Heavens*, and *find mercy in that day* when we ſhall ſtand in the greateſt need of it. Having in our life time ſhewn diſcreet compaſſion to the *Lazar*'s who are fit objects of it, we ſhall, when we die, be received into the boſom of the moſt bleſſed *Jeſus*, *to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be given all Honour for ever*. Amen.

FINIS.

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THE ſame Author hath an Excellent Treatiſe, *viz.* Of *Idolatry:* a Diſcourſe, in which is indeavoured a Declaration of, its Diſtinction from *Superſtition*, its Notion, Cauſe, Commencement, and Progreſs; its Practice charged on *Gentiles*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Gnoſticks*, *Manichees*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, *Romaniſts*: As alſo, of the Means which God hath vouchſafed towards the Cure of it by the *Shechinah* of his Son.

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